

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA, IT

SUBJECT: USE OF ITALIAN SIRIO SATELLITE

REF: (A) STATE 129833 (B) ROME 9580

1. DURING A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH ROBERT GOSS OF THE NASA DELTA LAUNCH VEHICLE PROJECT OFFICE, I EXPRESSED AN INTEREST IN DEMONSTRATING THE EXTENT AND DEPTH OF UNITED STATES AND ITALIAN COLLABORATION IN THE SPACE FIELD BY USING THE ITALIAN SIRIO SATELLITE FOR AN EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES BETWEEN HIGH AMERICAN AND ITALIAN POLITICAL LEADERS. THE SIRIO SATELLITE IS DUE TO BE LAUNCHED ON AUGUST 18 FROM CAPE CANAVERAL USING A NASA DELTA LAUNCH VEHICLE. REPLYING TO MY PROPOSAL (REF A), NASA ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS FRUTKIN RAISED THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT SUCH A PROPOSAL WAS TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE AND NOTED THAT NASA'S INTERESTS IN THE REALIZATION OF THIS PROJECT WERE SHARPLY LIMITED. WITHOUT PREJUDGING THIS ASPECT, IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT AN EXCHANGE OF GREETINGS SUCH AS WERE PROPOSED WOULD BE OF SUBSTANTIAL BENEFIT TO NASA, WHETHER OR NOT IT IS INVOLVED TECHNICALLY, AS WELL AS THE UNITED STATES* INTERESTS MORE GENERALLY.

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2. THE TECHNICAL QUESTION MUST BE RESOLVED

FIRST. PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN NASA AND CNR

TECHNICIANS APPEAR TO INDICATE THAT THE PROJECT IS

TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE. THIS PRELIMINARY JUDGMENT SHOULD

BE CONFIRMED AND THE COSTS OF SUCH A PROJECT ASCERTAINED.

3. ASSUMING THAT THE PROJECT PROVE TECHNICALLY FEASIBLE AND THE COST NOT EXORBITANT, WE MUST DECIDE EXACTLY WHO WILL EXCHANGE GREETINGS. FOR THIS DEMONSTRATION TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN DEMONSTRATING ITALIAN-U.S. COLLABORATION, THE PARTICIPANTS SHOULD MOST APPROPRIATELY BE PRESIDENT CARTER AND PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: (A) MR. FRUTKIN HAS INDICATED THAT NASA WOULD BE WILLING TO LOOK INTO THE TECHNICAL FEASIBILITY AND PREPARE COST ESTIMATES IF THE DEPARTMENT WISHES TO EXAMINE THE POSSIBILITY OF CARRYING OUT SUCH A DEMONSTRATION PROJECT. I RECOMMEND THAT THE DEPARTMENT ACCORDINGLY NOTIFY NASA SO THAT BASIC FEASIBILITY STUDIES MAY BEGIN.

(A) PROFESSOR SCANDONE, CHIEF OF THE ITALIAN NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL (CNR) SPACE ACTIVITIES SECTOR, HAS ENTHUSIASTICALLY ENDORSED THE PROPOSAL THAT POLITICAL LEADERS EXCHANGE GREETINGS USING THE SATELLITE. HE IS ATTEMPTING TO DETERMINE, ON A HIGHLY INFORMAL BASIS, WHETHER OR NOT THE POLITICAL LEVELS OF THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE WILLING TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS PROJECT. I BELIEVE THEY WILL BE WILLING. IT MAY NOT BE TOO EARLY, THEREFORE, TO BEGIN CONSIDERING AN APPROACH TO THE WHITE HOUSE IN THIS AREA.
GARDNER

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